

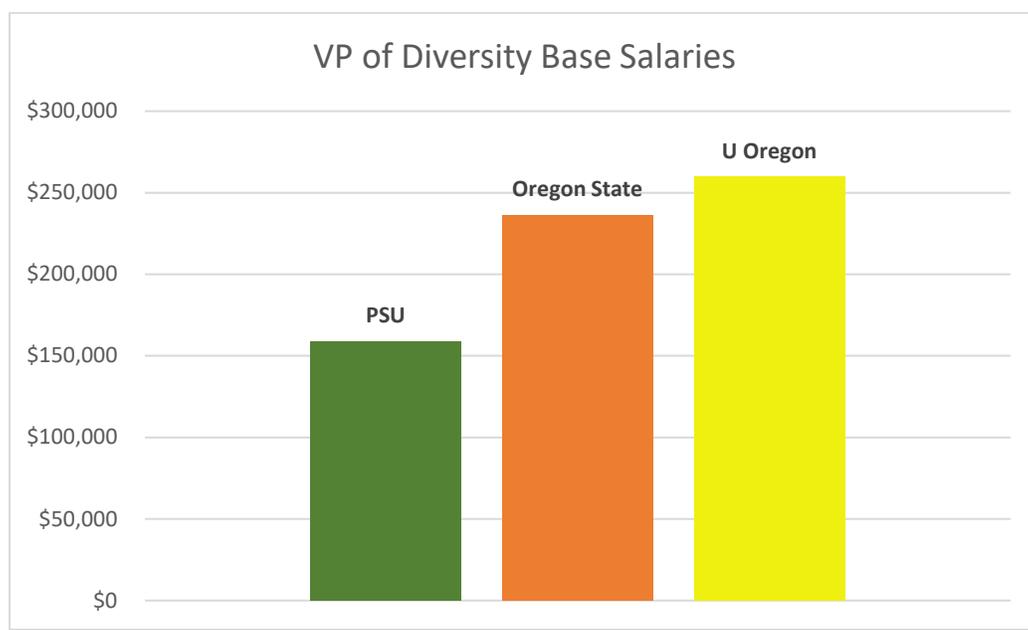
Issue Brief #3 (June 2020)

*The High-Cost of “Diversity” Bureaucracies at
Oregon Public Universities*

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The Issue

Contemporary diversity ideology – a set of narrow principles insisting on the preeminence of physical and cultural differences among individuals, a unity of political viewpoints, cultural relativism, and the undemocratic redistribution of power in society -- has transformed from an original focus on legal compliance with state and federal laws to a sweeping ideological program of transformation in Oregon higher education. Diversity bureaucracies enforce equity and inclusion policies, evaluating personnel and departmental perspectives on race, ethnicity, thought, culture, sexual orientation, and gender.

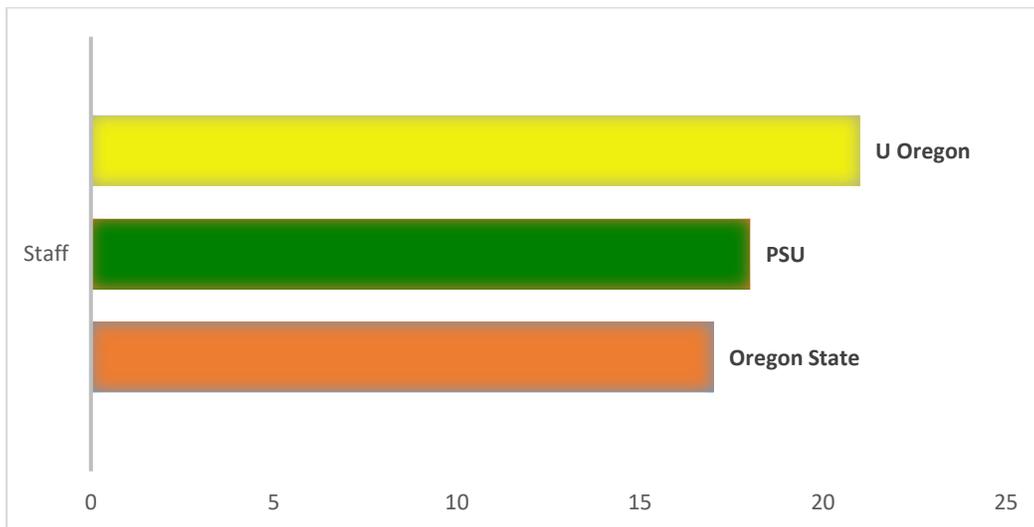


Source: Public record requests by OAS.

In the wake of nation-wide “black lives matter” protests and the destruction of public monuments in the name of “racial justice,” public universities in Oregon as elsewhere have succumbed to an obsessive moral panic that has further empowered diversity bureaucracies to impose diversity ideology on the campus community. As such, diversity bureaucracies are likely to assert an ever-growing presence on campuses in Oregon, even as higher education struggles to regain public trust, stabilize declining student enrolment, and restore financial stability.

The costs of diversity bureaucracies can be divided into three parts: accounting costs, administrative costs, and educational costs.

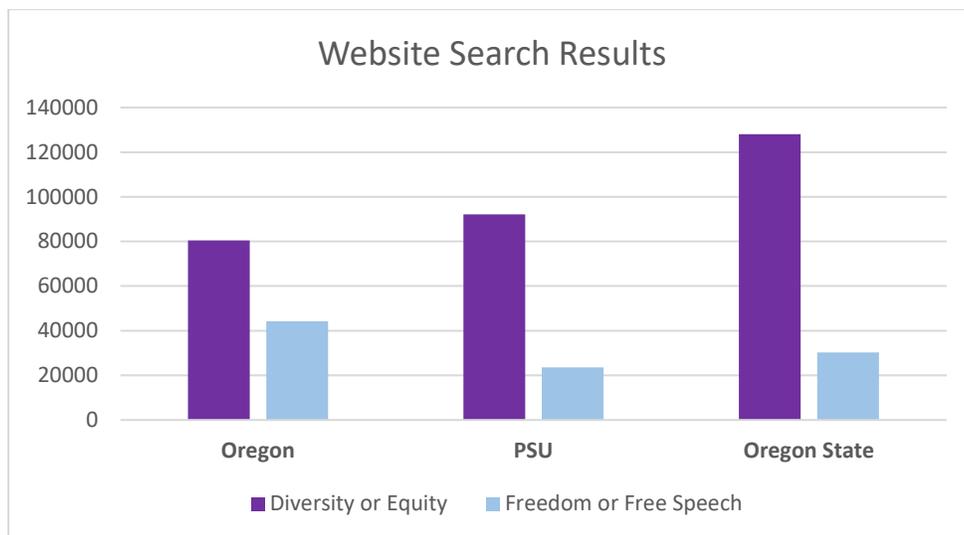
As of June 2020, diversity vice-presidents at the three major Oregon public universities earn an average base salary of \$218,000 (Figure 1). The health care and pension contributions made by universities raise the total average compensation by about 20% to \$262,000. In addition, the diversity bureaucracies at the three major Oregon universities employ an average of 19 full-time staff (Figure 2). Assuming an average total compensation of \$80,000, this adds an additional \$1.5 million in staff costs to the diversity bureaucracies at each university. In addition, the accounting costs of diversity bureaucracies include the university resources (office space, etc.) that they require to operate.



Source: University websites.

Administrative costs refer to inefficiency and the additional work burdens that diversity bureaucracies impose on other members of the university. Diversity training, mandates, investigations, committees, tracking, and organization all represent a deadweight loss on the role of the university in pursuit of research and teaching excellence. In effect, Oregon universities could achieve major cost-offset savings simply by telling most of their diversity bureaucrats to stay at home and do nothing. While the accounting costs would remain, the administrative costs would disappear.

By far the greatest cost of diversity bureaucracies is educational. By institutionalizing political and ideological viewpoints, and by wielding coercive tools with which to enforce them, diversity bureaucracies impose grave costs on the quality of education. This has a chilling effect on conversations in the classroom where faculty and students fear challenging diversity orthodoxy. Vigorous debate on the premises of the broad ideology that is “diversity” already have become impossible, if not dangerous, for faculty and students alike. Valuable teaching, research, and mentoring time is degraded by the need to step carefully through the “diversity minefield.” Premises concerning “discrimination” and “structural racism” have become cult-like requirements for survival at Oregon public universities, as elsewhere. The recent removal of former University of Oregon physics professor Dr. Stephen Hsu as vice president for research at Michigan State University as a result of a “diversity mob” shows that when diversity ideology becomes institutionalized through the administration, there is no defense for the critical principle of academic freedom. It is widely noted that academic freedom at American universities is now often less than at universities in Europe, not to mention Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, as a result of the intolerant climate bred by the spread of diversity ideology.



Source: University websites.

In recent weeks, departments at Oregon universities have pledged to reorganize their programs and curricula based on diversity ideology. They have undertaken to put group identities and victimization narratives at the center of their research. Just as orthodox Marxism cast a pall over research into economic systems in the past, this “cultural Marxism” will further erode excellence in an already narrowly ideological American higher education. Such problems are particularly acute in Oregon, where political diversity among faculty and staff has become virtually extinct.

One way to measure the spread of diversity ideology on Oregon university campuses is to use a simple search on the websites of the institutions using different keywords (Figure 3). This reveals that the diversity agenda overwhelms more mainstream concerns about academic

freedom and free speech on campus, roughly by two to one at the University of Oregon and four to one at Oregon State and Portland State. This reflects a more general experience on these college campuses, where students and faculty are daily bombarded with “diversity” and “equity” messages while the core principles of free speech, academic freedom, and more general concern with American constitutional liberties are increasingly drowned out, or treated as “problems” that need to be corrected with diversity mandates, bias training, speech codes and the hiring of new “resentment studies” professors.

Recommended Actions

Oregon taxpayers, policymakers, and parents are rightly concerned about what happens at the state’s publicly-funded universities and colleges. With little accountability or scrutiny, diversity bureaucracies continue to grow and impose grave costs on excellence in higher education. We recommend:

- *Accounting costs:* The size and accounting costs of diversity bureaucracies should be reduced by 50% immediately. This is consistent with the 50% reduction in bureaucratic costs recommended by the recent [Critical Care](#) report of the National Association of Scholars.
- *Administrative costs:* All university activities relating to “diversity”, other than those expressly and narrowly related to the implementation of state and federal laws, should be made voluntary for all members of the campus community. Attempts to mandate such activities should be expressly forbidden.
- *Educational costs:* University presidents must reiterate that nothing diversity bureaucracies do may take precedence over First Amendment rights, intellectual diversity, and academic freedoms on campus. Where there is a dispute, the latter must prevail.

Further Information

The Oregon Association of Scholars is the Oregon affiliate of the National Association of Scholars, a network of scholars and citizens united by a commitment to academic freedom, disinterested scholarship, and excellence in American higher education. Membership in NAS is open to all who share a commitment to these broad principles. NAS publishes a journal and has state and regional affiliates. Visit NAS at www.nas.org, and OAS at www.oregonscholars.org. Contact: Dr. Bruce Gilley, OAS President, info@oregonscholars.org